

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR LE EG XF

SUBJECT: FAHMY ON SYRIAN/LEBANESE SITUATION

REF: CAIRO 10297

SUMMARY: FAHMY CLAIMS RECENT BLISTERING EGYPTIAN
ATTACK ON SYRIA PROMPTED BY LATTER. SARG HAD PRESSED
PLO REPS TO INCLUDE SPURIOUS CHARGE THAT SINAI II
RESPONSIBLE FOR LEBANESE DEBACLE. THIS WAS WAVING
REF FLAG AND GOE RESPONDED BY PUBLICLY EXPOSING
SYRIAN/CHAMOUN COLLUSION WITH ISRAEL TO ELIMATE
PLO. GOE ALSO MADE PUBLIC FATAH REP ABU SHARARA'S
CHARGE TO ARAB LEAGUE OF SYRIAN HOSTILITY TO PLO
SO THAT PLO LEADERSHIP CANNOT LATER DENY SUCH CHARGES.
FATAH HAD EXPRESSED STRONG DISPLEASURE TO ARAFAT
ABOUT QADDUMI'S ACTION IN ACCEPTING SINAI II LANGUAGE.
SAUDIS ARE SAID TO UNDERSTAND THAT SYRIA
BEARS RESPONSIBILITY FOR EGYPTIAN ATTACK. GOE
SEEMS AT A LOSS WHAT TO DO NEXT VIS-A-VIS LEBANON
AND IS FRUSTRATED AT ITS INABILITY DO ANYTHING
MEANINGFUL TO PROTECT EGYPTIAN INTERESTS IN LEBANON.
AS RESULT, ONCE AGAIN THERE IS WIDESPREAD OFFICIAL
AND PUBLIC CHARGES OF ALLEGED US COLLUSION WITH
SYRIA TO ELIMINATE PLO. END SUMMARY.

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1. WHEN WITH FAHMY YESTERDAY IN ALEXANDRIA, I REFERRED TO THE BLISTERING EGYPTIAN ATTACK ON SYRIA A FEW DAYS AGO (REFTEL) AND ASKED WHAT HAD PROMPTED SO BITTER AN ATTACK AT A TIME WHEN FAHMY HAD REPEATEDLY ASSURED ME EGYPT AND SYRIA ARE NOW SEEKING RECONCILIATION. FAHMY ACKNOWLEDGED HE WAS THE EGYPTIAN "SPOKESMAN" AND PREENED HIMSELF ON WHAT HE HAD DONE. EGYPT AND SYRIA HAD INDEED AGREED TO A RECONCILIATION. GOE HAD HONORED THIS AND IS PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO DO SO AS LONG AS SYRIA DOES SO.

2. IT WAS THE SYRIANS WHO HAD RESUMED THE ATTACKS. LAST WEEK THERE HAD BEEN DIRECT SYRIAN CRITICISM OF EGYPT. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY THE SYRIAN INSTANCE UPON INSERTING LANGUAGE INTO THE PLO/SYRIAN COMMUNIQUE CHARGING SINAI II IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LEBANESE DEBACLE. THIS GOE IS NOT PREPARED TO TOLERATE. BRINGING SINAI II BACK INTO THE DEBATE IS LIKE WAVING A RED FLAG. HENCE, HIS ATTACK A FEW DAYS AGO EXPOSING SYRIAN DESIGNS. ASKED IF THE WAR OF WORDS WILL NOW RESUME, FAHMY SAID NOT NECESSARILY SO. IT DEPENDS ENTIRELY UPON SYRIA. HOWEVER, GOE INTENDS TO EXPOSE SYRIA BEFORE OTHER ARABS, AND ESPECIALLY THE ASAD/CHAMOUN COLLUSION WITH THE ISRAELIS TO ELIMINATE THE PLO. (FAHMY TOLD FRG AMBASSADOR STELTZER THAT USG WAS NOT INVOLVED IN ISRAELI CONTACTS WITH SYRIANS/MARONITES IN EITHER GENEVA OR PARIS AND USG AND WHEN LATER APPRISED OF THEM, HAD BEEN MUCH ANNOYED.)

3. FAHMY ASKED IF I HAD SEEN THE REMARKS OF FATAH REP ABU SHARARA WHICH HAD APPEARED IN THE CAIRO PRESS THAT MORNING (PARA 5, CAIRO 10351). HE CLAIMED THE REPORT IS A VERBATIM TEXT OF ABU SHARARA'S REMARKS TO THE LAST ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL SESSION. SINCE GOE HAS A FEW DOUBTS ABOUT ARAFAT AND POSSIBLE PLO VACILLATION, HE HAD DELIBERATELY PROVIDED THE PRESS WITH THE VERBATIM TEXT OF ABU SHARAR'S COMMENTS "SO THAT THE PLO CANNOT LATER

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DENY THAT IT HAS CHARGED SYRIA WITH ANTI-PALESTINIAN DESIGNS."

4. FAHMY RECALLED THAT, IMMEDIATELY AFTER WORD WAS RECEIVED OF THE SYRIAN/PLO AGREEMENT AND COMMUNIQUE, ARAFAT HAD TELEPHONED HIM TO EXPRESS RESERVATIONS ABOUT WHAT QADDUMI HAD DONE. HE, FAHMY, HAD EXPRESSED GOE STRONG DISPLEASURE AT QADDUMI'S

ACTION IN ACCEPTING SINAI II LANGUAGE. ARAFAT HAD INSISTED QADDUMI DID SO WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS AND ONLY ON SYRIAN INSTANCE. QADDUMI HAD DONE SO BELIEVING THIS STATEMENT COULD LATER BE DISAVOWED. FAHMY SAID GOE HAS NO OBJECTION TO SYRIAN/PLO RAPPROACHMENT, BUT INSISTS PRICE SHOULD NOT BE PLO CAPITULATION OR ANTI-EGYPTIAN POSTURE. IT IS BUCKING UP ARAFAT AND THE PLO TO STAND UP TO THE SYRIANS.

5. ASKED ABOUT SAUDI REACTION TO THE LATEST EGYPTIAN BLAST, FAHMY CLAIMED SAG UNDERSTANDS THAT SYRIA BEARS RESPONSIBILITY. KAMEL ADHAM HAD JUST BEEN HERE, BUT HAD SAID ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ABOUT IT. SAUDIS ABLE TO READ FOR THEMSELVES EGYPTIAN DISCLOSURES ABOUT SYRIAN/CHAMOUN CONTACTS WITH THE ISRAELIS. SHOULD SAG WISH MORE INFORMATION, GOE WILL BE PLEASED PROVIDE IT.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH FAHMY ACTED AS IF HE HAD SCORED TACTICAL VICTORY, IT IS CLEAR THAT GOE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT VIS-A-VIS LEBANON. IT CONTINUES TO HOPE THAT ARAB LEAGUE EFFORTS WILL SOMEHOW EVENTUALLY SUCCEED AND THAT PLO/JUMBLATT FORCES WILL IN THE MEANTIME RESIST MARONITE/SYRIAN PRESSURES. THERE IS NEVERTHELESS DEEP FRUSTRATION OVER GOE'S INABILITY TO DO ANYTHING MEANINGFUL ABOUT LEBANESE SITUATION. WHENEVER THAT HAPPENS, EGYPTIANS TEND TO FIND USG MOST CONVENIENT SCAPEGOAT TO CHARGE WITH ALLEGED COLLUSION WITH SYRIA TO ELIMINATE PLO. ALTHOUGH FAHMY HAS STOPPED MAKING THAT CHARGE, IT IS AGAIN WIDESPREAD AMONG EGYPTIAN OFFICIALDOM AND PUBLIC.

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